

# Reimagining Middle Schools

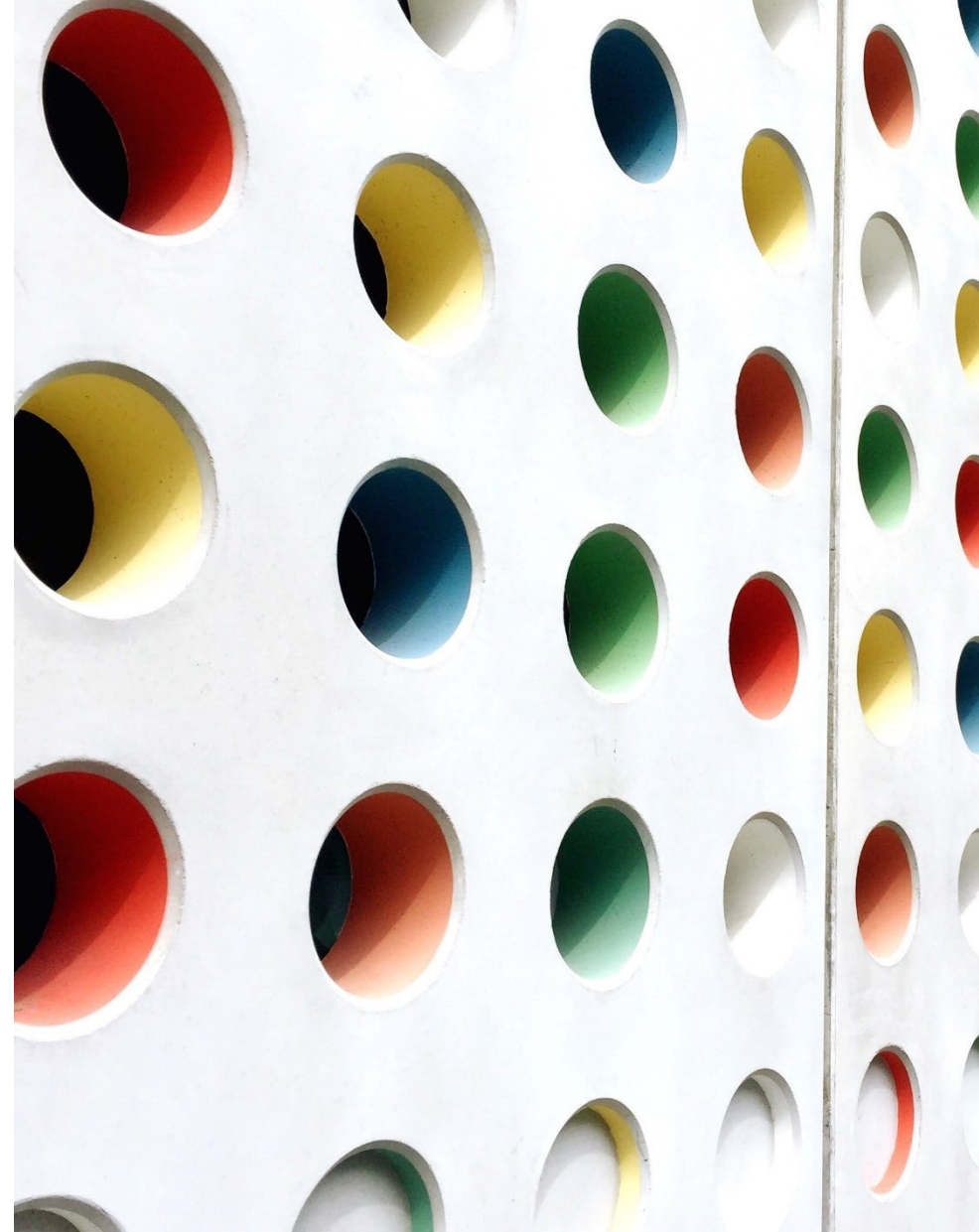
Chinook, Highland, Odle, Tillicum, Tyee

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BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROPOSAL

JUNE 2023



# What motivated you to join the RMS Steering Committee?

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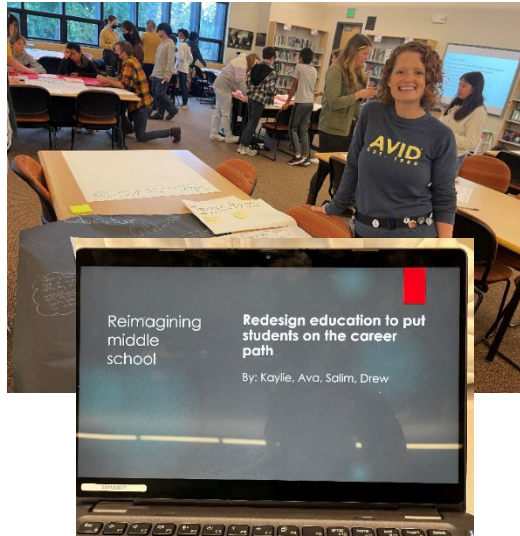
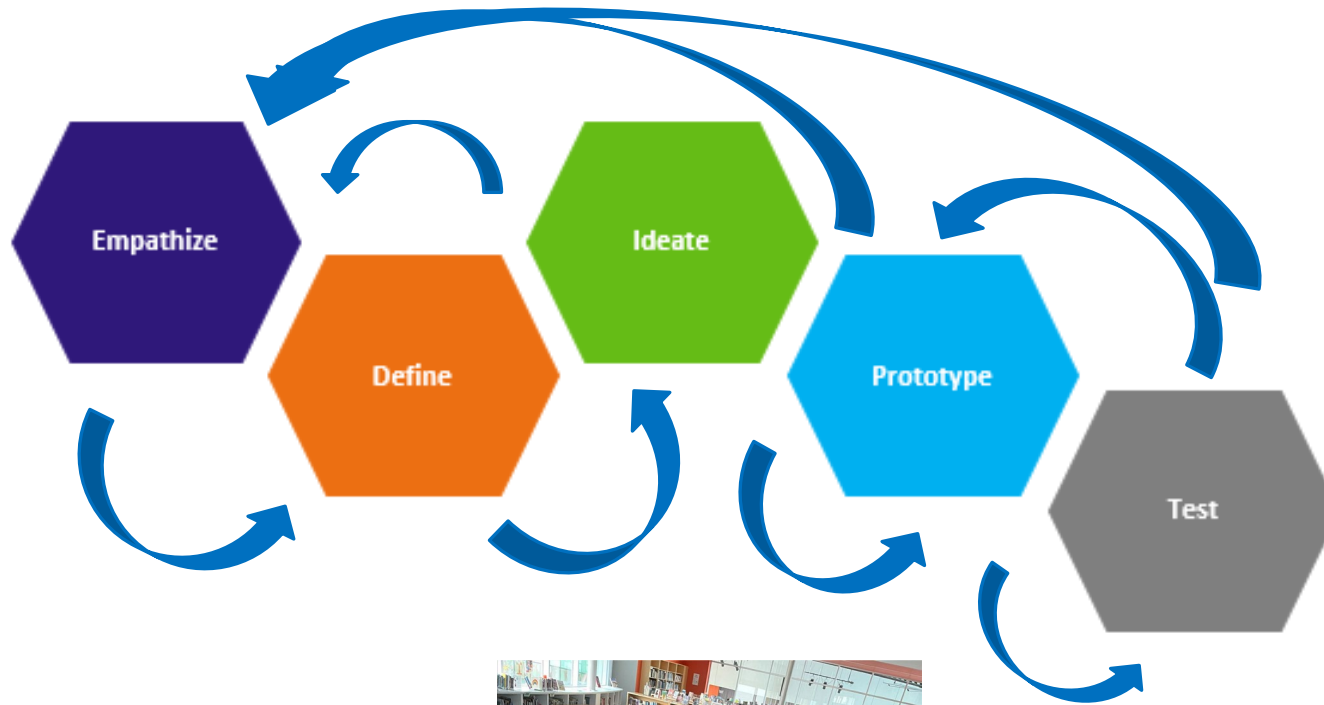


# Why Reimagine Middle Schools?

- **31% of 6-8 graders do not feel a strong sense of belonging**
- Approximately **30%** of 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders are **below standard** in **English Language Arts** proficiency
- Approximately **34%** of 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders are **below standard** in **Math** proficiency



# Equity-Centered Design Thinking Process



# *Our Listening Campaigns 2022-23*

Empathize

Define

Prototype

Test

## **Round 1: Empathize & Define**

- August-November
- 3 surveys
- 7 listening circles
- 10 Outreach visits
- 11 Student Panelists
- AVID Design Challenge
- Over 70 hours of Shadowing Students
- Additional data

## **Round 2: Prototype**

- March
- 18 Outreach visits
- Over 250 invested stakeholders
- Detailed, qualitative data

## **Round 3: Test**

- April
- MS Students
- MS Staff
- 5<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> grade Families
- 2,925 completed surveys

Empathize



# What Does Research Say?

## The Successful Middle School: This We Believe

### Essential Attributes

AMLE affirms that an education for young adolescents must be:

#### Responsive

Using the distinctive nature and identities of young adolescents as the foundation upon which all decisions about school are made.

#### Challenging

Cultivating high expectations and advancing learning for every member of the school community.

#### Empowering

Facilitating environments in which students take responsibility for their own learning and contribute positively to the world around them.

#### Equitable

Providing socially just learning opportunities and environments for every student.

#### Engaging

Fostering a learning atmosphere that is relevant, participatory, and motivating for all learners.



From *The Successful Middle School: This We Believe*, published by the Association for Middle Level Education. Build your own professional development plan with the Successful Middle School program.

Visit [amle.org/sms](http://amle.org/sms)

### Characteristics

Successful middle schools exhibit the following 18 characteristics:



#### Culture and Community

- Educators respect and value young adolescents.
- The school environment is welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all.
- Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- School safety is addressed proactively, justly, and thoughtfully.
- Comprehensive counseling and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- The school engages families as valued partners.
- The school collaborates with community and business partners.



#### Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Educators are specifically prepared to teach young adolescents and possess a depth of understanding in the content areas they teach.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and diverse.
- Health, wellness, and social-emotional competence are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- Instruction fosters learning that is active, purposeful, and democratic.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.



#### Leadership and Organization

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Policies and practices are student-centered, unbiased, and fairly implemented.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about young adolescents, equitable practices, and educational research.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Professional learning for all staff is relevant, long term, and job embedded.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.



# We Learned From Others

## School Visits (January & February 2023)

Design39Campus (*San Diego, CA*)



Odyssey Multiage Program (*Bainbridge Island, WA*)



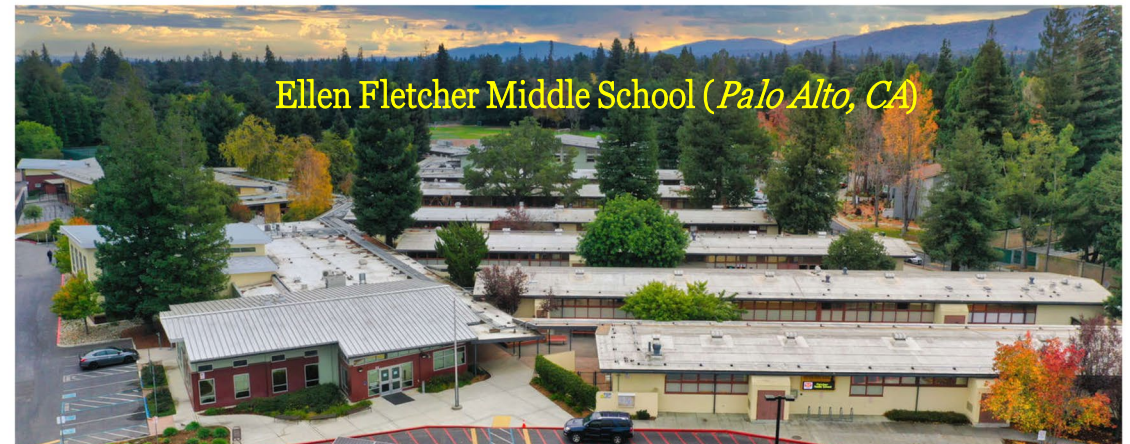
Intrinsic School, Belmont Campus (*Chicago, IL*)



Summit Atlas (*West Seattle, WA*)



Ellen Fletcher Middle School (*Palo Alto, CA*)





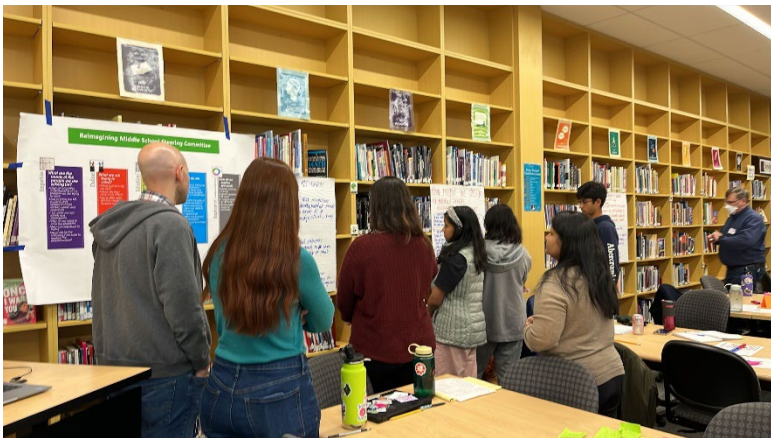
# What Emerged from “Empathize” Phase: *Student Needs*

## **Well-Being in Middle School:**

Students’ physical, social-emotional, community, and belonging needs are foundational to learning.

## **Academic Learning in Middle School:**

Ideally defined by student voice, choice, and responsibility in relevant, challenging, interactive, engaging, empowering environments.





# THE RMS VISION

WE WILL REDESIGN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE TO OFFER A DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE, STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATION

**1**

ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS  
& ACADEMIC  
INTERVENTIONS

**2**

**3**

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS &  
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS

MEET STUDENTS WHERE  
THEY ARE

**4**

# Opportunities Addressed

## WELL-BEING

Students' social-emotional, belonging, and personal needs are foundational to learning.

## ACADEMIC LEARNING

Ideally defined by student voice, choice and responsibility in relevant, challenging, interactive, engaging, empowering environments.

### OPPORTUNITIES ADDRESSED:

The need for an increased sense of belonging

A gap between skills taught and those needed for future success

A lack of meaningful connections with peers and adults

Irrelevant instruction and use of time

A need for breaks

A lack of interactive learning environments

Meaningful engagement and empowering student voice

The transition process between levels does not meet students' needs



# REIMAGINING MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOUR PROTOTYPES



**PROBLEM  
BASED  
LEARNING**

ELEVATING GLOBAL  
COMPETENCIES



**HOMEROOM/  
ADVISORY**



**SCHEDULING**



**TEACHER  
TEAMS**

# Four Prototypes

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Opportunities Addressed by Each Prototype	Problem-Based Learning	Homeroom / Advisory	Teacher Teams	Scheduling
The need for increased sense of belonging		✓		✓
A lack of meaningful connections with peers and adults		✓	✓	
A need for breaks		✓		
A gap between skills taught and those needed for future success	✓			✓
Irrelevant instruction and use of time	✓		✓	
A lack of interactive learning environments	✓			
Meaningful engagement and empowering student voice	✓	✓		✓
The transition process between levels does not meet students' needs (elementary→middle and middle→high school)		✓	✓	✓



# Committee Recommendations

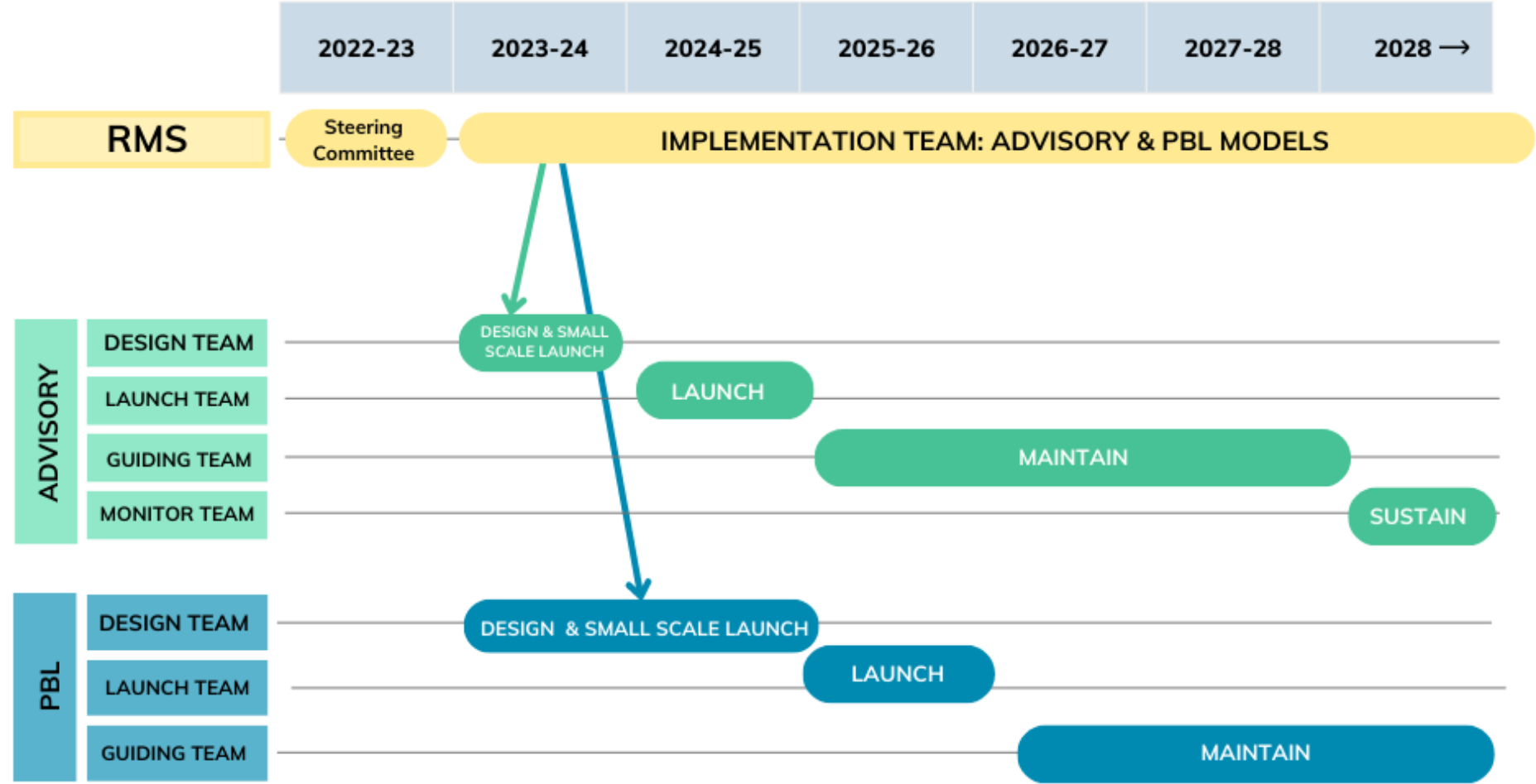
This is a time when students can connect with each other and feel like they belong at school. It can also help them when they move up to a new grade.



This is a way of learning where students get to do hands-on activities that are interesting and relevant to them. It can help them learn better and feel more motivated.

**Scheduling changes will be required to support implementation. The Teacher Teams prototype may be embedded in Advisory and PBL.**

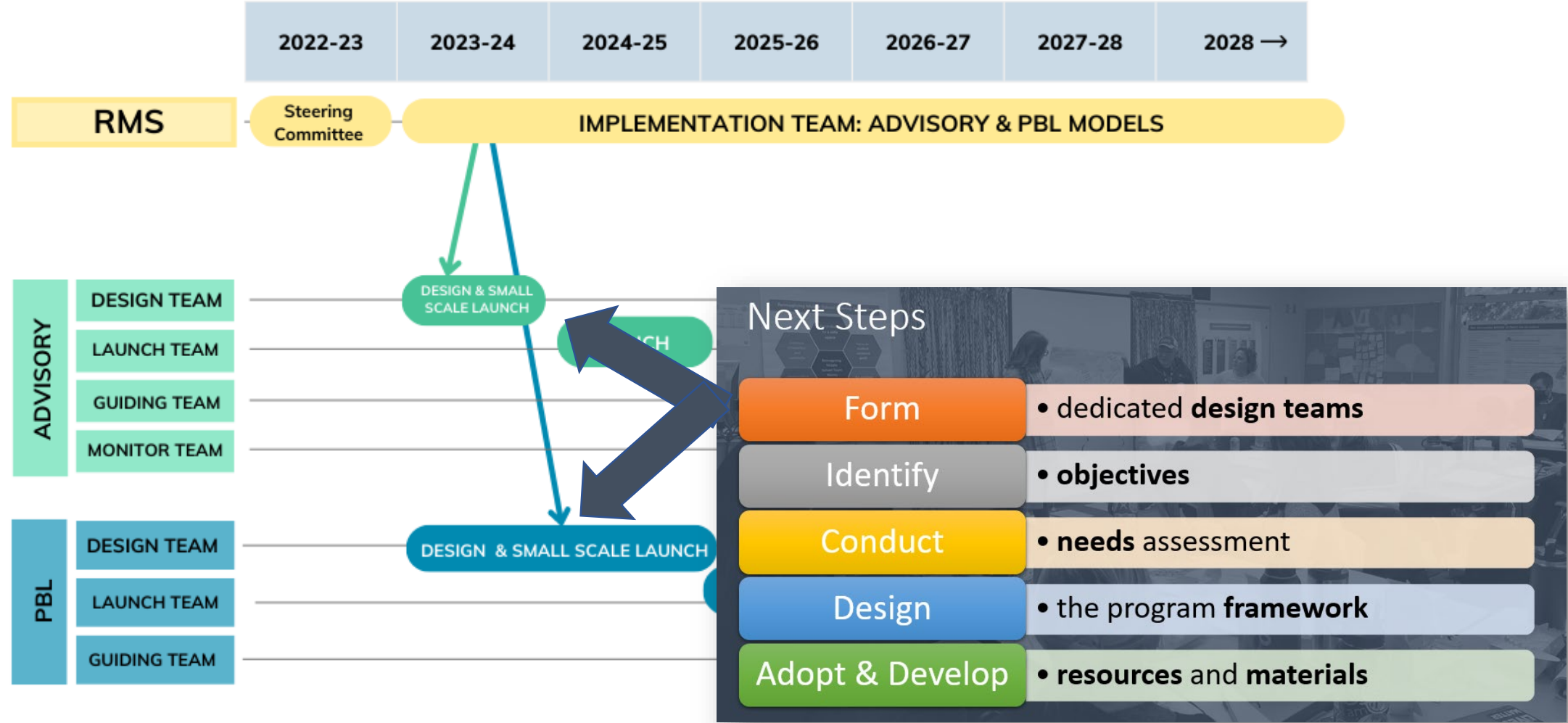
# Recommended Implementation Timeline



Throughout the projects, we will leverage continuous cycles of improvement, stakeholder input and criteria for evaluation.



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Throughout the projects, we will leverage continuous cycles of improvement, stakeholder input and criteria for evaluation.

Extensive Professional Development  
Comprehensive and Evidence-Based Curriculum  
Dedicated Staffing Considerations  
Robust Evaluation and Cycles of Improvement

## **Resource Allocation**

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# How will a reimagined middle school make you feel?

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chinook Middle School  
Highland Middle School  
Ode Middle School  
Tillicum Middle School  
Tyee Middle School  
The Bellevue Big Picture School  
The International School  
Bellevue Education Association (BEA)  
Bellevue PTSA Council and Building PTSA  
BSD Data & Assessment Department  
AVID Programs  
And Various School Groups and Clubs

# For More Information

[RMS@bsd405.org](mailto:RMS@bsd405.org)

<https://bsd405.org/departments/curriculum/reimagining-middle-school-steering-committee>



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## Reimagining Middle School Steering Committee

### Purpose

The Reimagining Middle School (RMS) Committee was developed to make suggestions for a **new, "reimagined" middle school model** that is based on research, co-designed with stakeholders, and includes:

- A more engaging and relevant academic program
- The integration of SEL instruction and relationship-building into the school day
- MTSS tiers/system of supports
- Global competency principles

TEACHING & LEARNING

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